

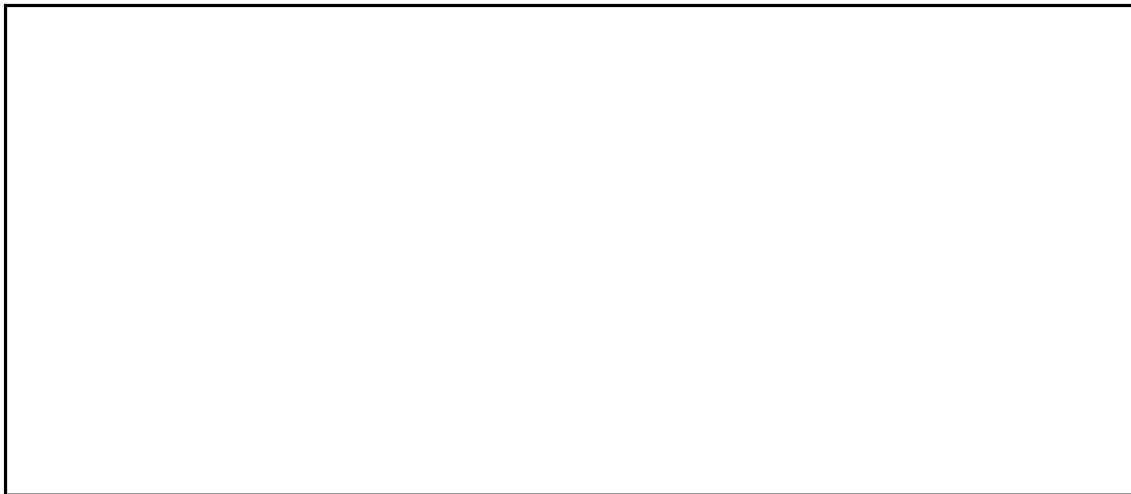


File

3 April 1972

Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters
Deputy Director, CIA
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Dick,



I shall be looking forward with anticipation to seeing you on Friday. Unless Captain Olsen, my Aide, notifies your office differently, my chopper will arrive at the Pentagon pad at 1130. If you could have transportation meet me there at that time, I would be most obliged.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,

John F. Freund

JOHN F. FREUND
Major General, USA

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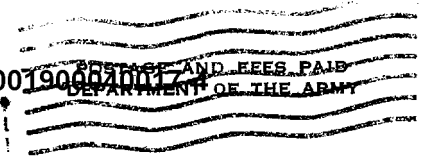
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Major General John F. Freund

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
1ST REGION

UNITED STATES ARMY AIR DEFENSE COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
STEWART FIELD, N. Y. 12550

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters
Deputy Director, CIA
Washington, D. C. 20505

Air Mail

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CONCLUSIONS

I. TRAINING

Conf 1. Great strides have been made in the development of small unit operations. Today, company and platoon level operations are routine in all of the divisions. This is not to imply in any way that the current status is satisfactory. It is, in fact, still unsatisfactory. The trend, however, is encouraging.

Conf 2. Great progress has been made in the training of RF and PF. In some cases their effectiveness exceeds that of the regular forces. However, there is not enough coordination between ARVN and these forces.

See 3. Reconnaissance operations are far below acceptable levels by any standard. Today, while contacts with the enemy are characteristically infrequent and of low intensity, we should be saturating our local areas of operations with small reconnaissance teams and supplementing these with long range reconnaissance patrols (LRRP). LRRPs are used infrequently "because we don't have the helicopters for insertion and extraction." When used, they normally patrol to distances of 5-10 km from their bases and remain in the field for from 5-7 days. Very rarely do they venture out of the range of 105mm howitzer support.

See 4. Night operations are *→ The enemy owns the night.* completely unsatisfactory. Many people give "lip service" to this important area of activity but our level of effectiveness is very low. The very valuable "starlight scope" is rapidly slipping into disuse. The numbers of these devices available both in the training base and in the tactical units are inadequate by a factor of ten. Further, it is the old models which are in general circulation, rather than the 2d generation devices (which were available at least 3 years ago in prototype form) which are smaller, lighter, more reliable and which have far greater effectiveness. Generally speaking, starlight scopes are used infrequently and, even then, in support of base area perimeters. They are rarely taken on field operations.

Conf 5. The training base has many elements of strength. LTG Chinh is performing with credit as Chief of the Army Training Command. Significant improvements have been effected in the National Training Centers (NTC) and many of the smaller training establishments have been noticeably upgraded. Ranges and methods of instruction have been patterned on Fort Benning. In many cases they are equivalent to this standard. (One NTC, Quang Trung, may not have made comparable progress.) On the negative side, the effort devoted to night operations, mines and booby traps, and reconnaissance

are inadequate. Additionally, continuing emphasis must be directed to raising the level of combat experienced officers and enlisted men associated with training. At Hoa Cam, for example, only about 50% of the instructor staff has had combat experience. *This is generally characteristic of all of the training centers.*

Conf
II. DOCTRINE. Operation exclusively within the limits of artillery support, and the employment of fixed fire bases for cross border operations have been transferred from the U.S. to the ARVN forces as elements of basic doctrine. Considering the greatly reduced artillery assets now available and the proven vulnerability of fixed fire bases in virtually all of our cross border operations, it would appear worthwhile to reassess these doctrinal guidelines. *Conf*

III. PERSONNEL

*why impact
15-50% is not
same for 60
they're divided into
teams*
①. Generally, Vietnamese combat units (particularly infantry) are at relatively low strength, and support units are at relatively high strength. *Conf*

②. An effective individual personnel replacement system has yet to be developed. Without such system even the best of the Vietnamese units can be reduced to ineffectiveness within a relatively short time while engaged in low intensity combat. *Sec*

③. The ARVN units have a very poor capability for sustained combat. In the I Corps area, for example, the strength of infantry battalions averages 75%. In low intensity combat (loss of 5 men per day -- half killed, half wounded), the offensive capability for these battalions would drop to negligible levels after two weeks of sustained action. In moderate or high intensity combat, the effective period of these units would be much shorter. *Sec*

④. We are, perhaps, making a major error in supporting an armed forces strength in Vietnam of over one million men. This conclusion may be substantiated on the following grounds: *Sec*

a. This total strength appears to be out of balance with the true threat.

b. This total strength places the current premium on quantity rather than quality. High quality cannot be supported in these numbers.

c. In looking to the realistic future, it does not appear reasonable to plan sustaining U.S. support on the basis of such strength. The transient effects upon the Vietnamese control system of a sudden reduction in supportable strength of, for example, 25% could have dangerous repercussions.

d. The current command structure in the RVNAF does not possess the span of control to cope with the strength, numbers and types of units implied in this force ceiling on a sustaining basis.

Conf ⑤. What is required in a smaller force of higher quality -- a force within our reasonable limits of support for at least the next 3 years.

Conf ⑥. The period between the present and such time in the future when our advisory strength in Vietnam stabilizes will be most critical. During this time it would appear to be in our best interests to restrict the assignment to Vietnam of senior field grade and general officers to those who have already served at least one tour in that country. We are penalizing ourselves seriously today by accepting the dead time required in the basic in-country orientation of new officers.

IV. INTELLIGENCE

TS ①. A strong possibility exists that we may be making serious errors in assessing the enemy order of battle. This results largely from our very high dependence (about 90%) on SIGINT and very low access to HUMINT. This factor, combined with the enemy's ability to infiltrate Vietnamese intelligence echelons, establishes a near perfect environment for the exercise of deception by the enemy. Our very low access to HUMINT results from an inadequate reconnaissance program, infrequent contacts with the enemy, low intensity combat when contact does occur, and inadequate agent networks.

See ②. Many indicators would tend to confirm that the enemy strength in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia is significantly less than that accepted in our current order of battle.

TS ③. In view of the strong possibilities of deception, as indicated above, infiltration data and logistic flow data as garnered through SIGINT channels should be considered suspect at best.

V. DANGER POINTS

See ①. The border camps in the II CTZ (all 12, from Dak Pek in the north to Bu Prang in the south) are very vulnerable to attack and reduction by the enemy. Three of these camps are not now accessible by road and would be most difficult, if not impossible, to reinforce by air while under attack. Successful support under such circumstances would be most costly. All of these camps are susceptible of rapid isolation by the destruction of their access roads. Not one of these installations provides a return commensurate with the cost of its maintenance. The loss incurred by their reduction by the enemy would be many times greater than their value to us. The camps themselves provide several valuable objectives for the enemy:

- a. Great psychological impact.
- b. Opportunity to alienate the Montagnards from the GVN.

- c. Valuable cache of weapons and ammunition.

These camps should be destroyed and their Montagnard resources re-deployed in defense of the general line Dak To, Kontum, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Gia Nghia.

See 2. The LOCs in Vietnam are most vulnerable. It is within the capability of the enemy to paralyze traffic on both primary and secondary roads in relatively large areas at a time of his choosing. The enemy is not exercising this option at this time because:

a. It is presently in his best interests to foster a sense of false security and complacency in the cities and countryside.

b. He is not yet ready to exploit the great psychological impact which such action would produce.

c. He is currently using the network of roads in the GVN for the movement of his own supplies.

Conf VI. CONTROL. Considering our present U.S. force levels in Vietnam, our rate of withdrawal, and our desire to "Vietnamize," we currently have too many headquarters elements in Vietnam and are being far too slow in relinquishing control of the war. Vietnamization has generally been from the bottom up, rather than from the top down. We should turn over complete control of the war to the Vietnamese immediately and concentrate our efforts on guiding and advising.

Conf VII. THE ARMY BANK. The Army Bank (See Incl 2, attached) created on 1 Jan 68, siphons off 100 piasters from the pay of all soldiers and officers each month (more than 1,000,000 personnel). This establishment of the bank and the arbitrary withdrawal of funds has been ~~accompanied~~^{accomplished} in accordance with a plan devised by Minister of Defense Nguyen Van Vy. This has not only resulted in widespread discontent in the military, but in a widening of the breach between Vy and Cao Van Vien who is very strongly opposed to these measures. This has become an issue of significant proportions and may well result in the dismissal of Vy from his position as MOD.

Prob'ly str'g that en will initiate maj atk
prior to Nov. En will have advant of:

a. Intel

b. Surprise

1. Infiltratn in ARVN

2. Timing

3. Str in area of Main Effort

ARVN forces presently complacent and have false
sense of security. Their intel is poor and very
little is being done to improve it.

The En owns the night.

Bdr Camps - Dak Pek

LOC's

Folly of: forays into Cambodia
bombing to the north

Present keynote should be on intensive
preperation for what is sure to come

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